



## Mastery, technique and sharp knives

**31st and 17th, or in other words, the Ham Cutting Contest / Dehesa de Extremadura and the Oyster Opener-Écailleurs / Sorlut / Grupo Gourmets / Spanish Championship, two classics of the Salon Gourmets, which are both celebrating their respective editions. But what three things do these two competitions have in common?**

Mastery, only the best are up to the task, master cutters and oyster openers have a limited time to complete the test, not only under the watchful eye of the Jury, but also of the public present during the competition.

Knives, well sharpened. When it comes to slicing a ham, every master cutter has two knives, one long and flexible for slicing and the other short and strong for boning and cleaning. In the case of oysters, an oyster knife, with a narrow, short and sharp blade, perfect for levering.

And technique is essential in both championships. As recommended by the DOP Dehesa de Extremadura, the first thing to do is to remove the rind and yellow fat and then try to keep the cutting surface clean and flat. Taking advantage of all the parts of the ham is fundamental, the maza (the highest part) for its juiciness, the babilla (the lowest part) for its intensity and the punta (the back part) for its deep flavour, the contestants have to present a plate of each of these parts to the Jury. The thinner the slices, the easier they are to place on the plate, this is important because the contestants also have to prepare a dish in which presentation will be rewarded.

As for the oysters, Daniel Sorlut recommends that they should be very cold when opening them, as this makes the process easier. The first thing to do is to take the oysters with the flat side up and the hinge pointing towards you, then insert the knife into the top left side of the oyster, where the two lids meet. When the tip is inside, move the hand holding the knife up and down until the oyster opens. Once open, cut the muscle to release it.

This year, as a novelty, the participants will have to open 40 oysters instead of 30 and the mechanics of the competition will have two semi-finals, with 4 contestants in each, and the final, with the 4 resulting aspirants aspiring to win the title.



It sounds easy but only one will win the coveted title, either Best Ham Cutter 2025 or Best Oyster Opener in Spain 2025. The date? At Europe's most exclusive Fine Food and Beverages Fair, where else?

- 31st Ham Cutting Contest / Dehesa de Extremadura. Monday 7 April, 11:30 to 14:00 h. Gourmets Stage (hall 6)
- 17th Oyster Opener-Écailleurs / Sorlut / Grupo Gourmets / Spanish Championship. Tuesday 8 April, 13:30 to 17:00 h. Gourmets Stage (hall 6)

**From 7 to 10 April 2025**  
**at Ifema Madrid**

**SALÓN**  
**GOURMETS**